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The

HISTORY OF A RIVER THIEF

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J. McCauley

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OR, THE

HISTORY OF A RIVER THIEF,

BRIEFLY TOLD.

By Jeremiah McAuley

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PUBLISHED BY HIMSELF.

N.Y. 1876

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By

Jeremiah McAuley.

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PREFACE.

THIS little narrative is presented to the public with the single desire to magnify the grace of God. It is to show his mighty power in raising a soul dead in sin, and past all human hope of resurrection, to spiritual life. It is given, with few and trifling exceptions, as it fell from the lips of the "Transformed," and is condensed from a mass of strikingly interesting incidents which might have made a far more imposing volume. The design, however, has been to make a book sufficiently small and inexpensive to be freely circulated, that it may go out as a message of encouragement to those who have no hope for themselves by reason of sin, and to Christians whose faith is often too weak to take hold of men and women so utterly cast down and bound by Satan.

My own part of the work, though small, has been a sincere pleasure. As I have put the story into shape for the press, I have been led to admire the grace of God as manifested to this untaught and wicked man, and to recall the words of Jesus,

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." I have been taught, while preparing this simple biography, and during a three years' acquaintance with its subject, deep and sweet lessons of faith in work with the outcast and fallen, both men and women. No erring fellow-creature has sunk so low in grovelling vice, but that now I believe, however my faith was formerly staggered, that Jesus is "able to save to the uttermost." And this is a lesson of priceless value to the Christian worker. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and it may be said of the gospel-hardened, outwardly respectable sinners in these days, as our Lord said of the chief priests and Pharisees of his own time, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

It is my earnest prayer that the mission of this little volume may be one of gospel love and power, winning many a wretched, hopeless wanderer to the knowledge of the blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, "whose blood can make the foulest clean," and who alone is able to call a soul "out of darkness into his marvellous light."

MRS. HELEN E. BROWN.

NEW YORK, Dec. 7, 1875.

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CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

"Our young life had dark beginning,
Helpless and alone we lay;
Knowing only sin and sorrow,
Till the Saviour passed that way."

I DO not attempt this record of my life from any feeling of vain-glory, or any craving for notoriety. Neither is it because I have had a remarkable history. I have been a great sinner, and have found Jesus a great Saviour, and this is why I would tell my story, that others may be led to adore and seek the blessed Friend who saved, and has thus far kept me by his grace.

I was born in Ireland. Our family was

broken up by sin, for my father was a counterfeiter, and left home to escape the law, before I knew him. I was placed at a very early age in the family of my grandmother, who was a devout Romanist. My first recollections of her are of her counting her beads, and kissing the floor for penance. I would take the opportunity while she was prostrated upon her face, to throw things at her head, in my mischievous play, and when she rose from her knees, it was to curse and swear at me. At such times I can distinctly remember thinking, though I could not have formed the thought into words, "What sort of religion is this that requires such foolish worship, and allows such sinful ways?" I can trace my infidelity to Rome to just these incidents.

I was never taught or sent to school, but left to have my own way; to roam about in idleness, doing mischief continually, and suffering from the cruel and harsh treatment of those who had the care of me.

At the age of thirteen I was sent to this country, to the care of a married sister in New York city. Here I ran errands in the family, and assisted my brother-in-law in his business, and soon, by the practice of little tricks, became well used to dishonesty, and was as great a rogue as one of my years could be. After a while I felt I could live by my own wits, and left my sister's home to take care of myself. I took board in a family in Water street, where were two young men with whom I associated myself in business. I earned what I could, and stole the rest, to supply my daily wants.

We had a boat, by means of which we boarded vessels in the night, stealing whatever we could lay our hands on. Here I began my career as a river-thief. In the daytime we went up into the city and sold our ill-gotten goods, and with the proceeds dressed up, and then spent our time, as long as our money lasted, in the vile dens of Water street, practising all sorts of wickedness. Here I

learned to be a prize-fighter, and by degrees, rapid degrees, rose through all the grades of vice and crime, till I became a terror and nuisance in the Fourth ward.

CHAPTER II.

GOING TO PRISON.

"Oh, the darkness, how it thickens,
Like the brooding of despair!
And my soul within me sickens—
God, in mercy, hear my prayer!"

I WAS only nineteen years of age when I was arrested for highway robbery—a child in years, but a man in sin. I knew nothing of the criminal act which was charged to my account; but the rumsellers and inhabitants of the Fourth ward hated me for all my evil ways, and were glad to get rid of me. So they swore the robbery on me, and I could n't help myself. I had no friends, no advocate at court, (it is a bad thing, sinners, not to have an advocate at court,) and without any just cause I was sentenced to fifteen years in Stateprison. I burned with vengeance; but what could I do? I was handcuffed, and sent in the cars to Sing-Sing.

That ride was the saddest hour of my life. I looked back on my whole past course, at all my hardships, my misery and sins, and gladly would I have thrown myself out before the advancing train, and ended my life. It was not sorrow for sin that possessed me, but a heavy weight seemed to press me down when I thought of the punishment I had got to suffer for my wrong-doings, and an indignant, revengeful feeling for the injustice of my sentence. Fifteen years of hard labor in a prison to look forward to, and all for a crime I was as innocent of as the babe unborn. I knew I had done enough to condemn me, if it were known; but others, as bad as I, were at liberty, and I was suffering the penalty for one who was at that hour roaming at will, glorying in his lucky escape from punishment, and caring nothing for the unhappy dog who was bearing it in his stead. How my heart swelled with rage, and then sank like lead, as I thought of my helplessness in the hands of the law, without a friend in the world.

I concluded, however, before I reached the end of that short journey, that my best way was to be obedient to prison rules, do the best I could under the circumstances, and trust that somebody would be raised up to help me.

When I arrived at the prison—I shall never forget it—the first thing that attracted my attention was the sentence over the door: "The way of transgressors is hard." Though I could not read very well, I managed to spell that out. It was a familiar sentence, which I had heard a great many times. All thieves and wicked people know it well, and they know, too, that it is out of the Bible. It is a well-worn proverb in all the haunts of vice, and one confirmed by daily experience. And how strange it is that, knowing so well that the way is hard, the transgressors will still go in it.

But God was more merciful to me than man. His pure eyes had seen all my sin, and yet he pitied and loved me, and stretched

out his hand to save me. And his wonderful way of doing it was to shut me up in a cell within those heavy stone walls. There 's many a one beside me who will have cause to thank God for ever and ever that he was shut up in a prison.

CHAPTER III.

THE LOST SHEEP FOUND.

"There were ninety-and-nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
But one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold;
Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care."

I WAS put to the carpet-weaving business, and for two years not a word could be said against me. All the keepers and guards spoke well of me. I minded my work, and was quiet and orderly. I used to say my prayer—the Lord's Prayer—every day, from a feeling that it was right to say it, and that in some way or other it would do me good. I tried to learn to read and write, and improved very much, more especially in reading. Then I got cheap novels and read, to pass away the time. I read many and many of them. It was all the recreation I had, and

diverted my mind from my dreary surroundings. I was supplied with them constantly, and, in consequence, my head was filled with low and wicked thoughts. I took a fancy, from some of the remarkable stories I read, that I might by some good fortune, by-and-by, effect my escape from the prison, and then my heart would fill up with murderous intentions toward the man who put me in.

After this I was sick, and suffered a good deal for two or three years, and became at times uneasy and intractable. Then I had to suffer severe punishment; but punishment never did me a particle of good, it only made me harder and harder.

I had been in the prison four or five years, when, one Sunday morning, I went with the rest to service in the chapel. I was moody and miserable. As I took my seat, I raised my eyes carelessly to the platform, and who should I see there beside the chaplain but a man named Orville Gardner, who had been

for years a confederate in sin. "Awful Gardner" was the name by which I had always known him. Since my imprisonment he had been converted, and was filled with desire to come to the prison, that he might tell the glad story to the prisoners. I had not heard he was coming, and could not have been more surprised if an angel had come down from heaven. I knew him at the first glance, although he was so greatly changed from his old rough dress and appearance. After the first look I began to question in my mind if it was he after all, and thought I must be mistaken; but the moment he spoke I was sure, and my attention was held fast.

He said he did not feel that he belonged on the platform, where the ministers of God and good men stood to preach the gospel to the prisoners; he was not worthy of such a place. So he came down and stood on the floor in front of the desk, that he might be among the men. He told them it was only

a little while since he had taken off the stripes which they were then wearing; and while he was talking his tears fairly rained down out of his eyes. Then he knelt down and prayed, and sobbed and cried till I do not believe there was a dry eye in the whole crowd. Tears filled my eyes, and I raised my hand slowly to wipe them off, for I was ashamed to have my companions or the guards see me weep; but how I wished I was alone, or that it was dark, that I might give way to my feelings unobserved. I knew this man was no hypocrite. We had been associated in many a dark deed and sinful pleasure. I had heard oaths and curses, vile and angry words from his mouth, and I knew he could not talk as he did then unless some great, wonderful change had come to him. I devoured every word that fell from his lips, though I could not understand half I heard. One sentence, however, impressed me deeply, which he said was a verse from the Bible. The Bible! I knew there was such a book,

that people pretended it was a message from God; but I had never cared for it, or read a word in it. But now God's time had come, and he was going to show me the treasures that were hid in that precious book.

CHAPTER IV.

SEARCHING FOR TRUTH.

"This is the field where hidden lies
The pearl of price unknown;
The merchant is divinely wise
Who makes the pearl his own."

I WENT back to my cell. How dreary is Sunday in prison! After the morning service in the chapel, the prisoners are marched back to their cells, taking their plate of dinner with them as they pass the dining-hall, and the rest of the day is spent in solitude. Oh, those long, dismal hours! I had generally contrived to have a novel on hand, but that day I had none. What I had heard was ringing in my ears, and the thought possessed me to find the verse which had so struck me. Every prison cell is supplied with a Bible; but, alas! few of them are used. Mine I had never touched since the day I entered my narrow apartment, and laid it

away in the ventilator. I took it down, beat the dust from it, and opened it. But where to turn to find the words I wanted I knew not. There was nothing to do but to begin at the beginning, and read till I came to them. On and on I read. How interested I grew! It seemed better than any novel I had ever read, and I could scarcely leave it to go to sleep. I became so fascinated, that from that day on, it was my greatest delight. I was glad when I was released from work, that I might get hold of my Bible; and night after night, when daylight was gone, I stood up by my grated door to read by the dim light which came from the corridor. I had supposed it to be a dry, dead thing—a book only fit for priests and saints, but now, whenever I could get a chance to communicate with my mates in the workshop. I told them that it was a "splendid thing, that Bible."

I never found that verse. I had forgotten it in my new interest in the book. But I found a good many verses that made me

stop and think. At last I came to 1 Timothy, fourth chapter, which begins in this way: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." I threw down the book, and kicked it about my cell. "The vile heretics," I cried; "there 's their lies. I always heard the old book was a pack of lies. That 's the way they hold us Catholics up."

Something seemed to whisper to me, "Go get a Catholic Bible, and then you can prove this to be false." I could n't get rid of the thought. I took my first chance to go to the library and ask for a Catholic Bible. They looked at me pretty sharp, as though they would like to understand what I was

driving at; but they gave me what I wanted, and I took it to my cell. Eagerly I turned to that chapter. There they were, the very same words, "forbidding to marry," and "commanding to abstain from meats." But there were notes in the margin, which boxed it up so, that my suspicions were at once aroused. I said, "It surely is the word of God, and they are trying to get out of it." I turned to various parts, to Kings, Isaiah, and other books, and I found that the words in both were almost the same, the meaning was the same always, and I was in despair. Then I read the whole book through again, and liked it better the second time than I did the first. The book of Revelation particularly astonished me. I tried to believe, but I could not understand it.

CHAPTER V.

BEHOLD, HE PRAYETH.

"I cannot, in my sore dismay,
E'en lift my eyes to thee;
But trembling bow, dear Lord, and wait
Till thou shalt speak for me."

I WAS resting one night from reading, walking up and down and thinking what a change religion had made in Gardner, when I began to have a burning desire to have the same. I could not get rid of it; but what could I do? Something within me said "Pray." I could n't frame a prayer. The voice said, "Do n't you remember the prayer of the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner'?" I thought of my own religion, the Roman-catholic faith, in which I had been brought up, and I asked, "Why can't I be good in that?" "But that will not save me as Gardner's does him," I thought; "it does not keep me free from my sins." There was

a struggle in my mind. "If I send for the priest," I said to myself, "he will tell me I must do penance, say so many prayers, and do something for mortification, and such as that. If I ask the chaplain, he will tell me to be sorry for my sins, and cry to God for forgiveness. Both can't be right." The voice within said, "Go to God; he will tell you what is right."

What a struggle I went through! I knew I ought to pray; but if there had been ten thousand people there I could n't have been more ashamed to do it than I was there all alone. I felt myself blushing. Every sin stared me in the face. I recollected the "Whosoever" in the Bible. "That means you," said the inward voice. "But I 'm so wicked," I urged; "everything but a murderer, and that many a time in my will." The struggle did not seem all my own; it was as if God was fighting the devil for me. To every thought that came up there came a verse of the Scripture. I fell on my knees,

and was so ashamed I jumped up again. I fell on my knees again, and cried out for help, and then, as ashamed as before, I rose again. I put it off for that time and went to bed.

This conflict went on for three or four weeks. It was fearful. I wonder now at the long-suffering mercy of my God. I wonder that the Holy Spirit was not grieved to depart from me for ever. But at last the Lord sent a softness and tenderness into my soul, and I shed many tears. Then I cried unto the Lord, and began to read the Bible on my knees.

The Sunday services seemed to do me no good. They were dry and dead to me. Once in a while a man full of the Holy Ghost preached for us, and at such times I got a little help. About that date Miss D—— began to visit the prison, and I was sent for one day to meet her in the library. This young lady had learned that I was seeking the Saviour, and had asked to see me. She talked with me, and then knelt down to pray.

I felt ashamed, but I knelt beside her. I looked through my fingers and watched her. I saw her tears fall. An awe I cannot describe fell on me. It seemed dreadful to me, the prayer of that holy woman. It made my sins rise up till they looked to me as if they rose clean up to the throne of God, and it appeared to me as if they troubled God, they rose up so high. What should I do? Oh, what can a poor sinner do when there is nothing between him and God, but a life of dark, terrible sin?

CHAPTER VI.

THE MORNING BREAKETH.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say
'Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast.'"

That night I fell on my knees on the hard stone-floor of my cell, resolved to stay there, whatever might happen, till I found forgiveness. I was desperate. I felt just like the words of the hymn,

"Perhaps he will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer,
But if I perish I will pray,
And perish only there."

I prayed, and then I stopped; I prayed again, and stopped; but still I continued kneeling. My knees were rooted to those cold stones. My eyes were closed, and my hands tightly clasped, and I was determined I would stay so till morning, till I was called

to my work; "and then," said I to myself, "if I get no relief, I will never, never pray again." I felt that I might die, but I did n't care for that.

All at once it seemed as if something supernatural was in my room. I was afraid to open my eyes. I was in an agony, and the sweat rolled off my face in great drops. Oh, how I longed for God's mercy! Just then, in the very height of my distress, it seemed as if a hand was laid upon my head, and these words came to me: "My son, thy sins which are many are forgiven." I do not know if I heard a voice, yet the words were distinctly spoken. Oh, the precious Christ! How plainly I saw him, lifted on the cross for my sins! What a thrill went through me. I jumped from my knees; I paced up and down my cell. A heavenly light seemed to fill it; a softness and a perfume like the fragrance of sweetest flowers. I did not know if I was living or not. I clapped my hands and shouted, "Praise God! Praise God!"

One of the guards was passing along the corridor, and called out, "What's the matter?" "I've found Christ," I answered; "my sins are all forgiven. Glory to God!" He took out a paper from his pocket and wrote the number of my cell, and threatened to report me in the morning. But I didn't care for that. My soul was all taken up with my great joy. But the next morning nothing happened to me, and I think the Lord made him forget it. What a night that was! I shall surely never forget the time when the Lord appeared as my gracious Deliverer from sin.

From that time life was all new to me. Work was nothing; hard fare nothing; scowls and harsh words nothing. I was happy, for Jesus was my friend; my sins were washed away, and my heart was full of love and thanksgiving. I hated every sinful way. I had formerly smoked, but something within now said it was wrong, and I gave it up.

And the Lord began to use me in the

prison, among my fellow-convicts. A great work was commenced there, and spread from cell to cell. The prisoners began to read their Bibles, to call upon God, and to praise the name of Jesus.

CHAPTER VII.

WORK IN THE PRISON.

"Then will I tell to sinners round
What a dear Saviour I have found;
I 'll point to Thy redeeming blood,
And say, 'Behold the way to God!'"

JACK DARE was the first man I began to pray for. There was a revolt in the prison about that time, and he was one of the leaders. This revolt occurred some time before my conversion, but I had no hand in it.

Jack was in the same workshop with me, and was quite a favorite. The convicts often paired off in friendships, and he and I went together. If either of us had any little luxury we shared it with the other, as children would do; and when I got salvation I wanted to share that with him. I approached him on several occasions with the subject, but he repulsed me with sneers. He seemed

to think I was playing a bold game to get out of prison; but he learned at last that I was in earnest.

He found me several times weeping and poring over my Bible. Once he lifted his hand to strike me, and even spit at me; but when I told him that I had no resentment, and could stand it for Jesus' sake, he was touched. That astonished him. I said nothing more for a week, and he seemed to be getting worse all the time; but I felt sure the Spirit of God was striving with him. I kept on praying with strong crying and tears, and I knew God would save him.

One day he told me he had been praying, but it seemed dreadful to him to pray. I knew all about that from my own experience. Not long after this, as he came out of his cell one morning to go to work, I caught sight of his face, and it was all lit up. He was at the head of the column, and I near the foot; he just glanced at me with a smile, and gave an upward turn of his eye to heaven, and then I

knew it was all right with him. I could scarcely keep from shouting.

The first one he told the good news to was the keeper. "Jack," said he, "I 'm glad you 've got religion." It was not that he cared for religion, but he was afraid of Jack, he was such a desperate character, and now he knew he would have no more trouble with him.

All the time I had to work for Christ was about half an hour each day, and I improved it. This was when the regular keeper was relieved, and we were allowed then to talk. I had my men all picked out, and I went from one to the other, saying the few earnest words I could say. Several of these were converted. One or two wandered away when they left the prison, having no Christian friend to look after them. Since that time they have come into the Helping Hand, and have been sweetly restored.

About two years I went on thus. My faith was so simple, I felt the Lord would give me anything reasonable I might ask. And I

never had a doubt until after I came out of prison and mingled with Christians, and their wavering, unstable, half-and-half faith staggered me. My cell seemed to me all that time like heaven, and I cared very little whether I ever came out of it or not. The love of Christ was so abounding it drowned every trouble. No one could insult me. If my comrades abused me, I felt that I could pray for and forgive them.

After this I was led to pray for my liberty. At first I felt that the desire to be set free was of the devil. But I asked the Lord about it, and he gave me the assurance that my desire should be granted. And it was; I received a pardon from the governor after having served about half my time, seven years and six months.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUTSIDE.

"In the way a thousand snares
Lie, to take us unawares;
Satan, with malicious art,
Watches each unguarded part."

When I got out of prison I was as lonely as I had been in my cell. I could not go back to my old haunts and companions, and I knew no others. If I had found a single Christian friend it would have saved me years of misery. And here I must say that it does not seem to me right to turn men out of prison, and make no provision for their future well-doing. Many a poor fellow has been driven to crime, and back again to his prison cell, for want of kindly counsel and direction when he first came out again into the world.

I wanted to do right, to please God. The first thing I did was to inquire for a prayer,

meeting. I was told of one; but when I got to the door I was afraid to enter. I had never been to a Protestant place of worship, and nobody invited me in. I kept steadily away from the Fourth ward, lest I should be tempted by old associates. Most unfortunately the only friend I found directed me to a lager-bier saloon to board. Lager-bier had come up since I went to prison, and I did not know what it was. They told me it was a harmless drink, wholesome and good, and simple as root-beer. I drank, and that began my downfall. My head got confused. The old appetite was awakened. From that time I drank it every day, and it was not long before I went from that to stronger liquors.

The night I stopped praying I shall never forget. I felt as wretched as I did the day I went to prison. And now began a career of sin and misery which I cannot fully describe. Satan got completely the upper hand of me. The dear Saviour who had been so gracious and so precious to me in the prison I let go.

How I wonder now that he did not let me go. But he did not.

I had obtained work in a large hat shop. The workmen had a strike, and I was one of the ringleaders. We were all dismissed, and thus I was thrown out of employment. Then, it being war time, I went into the bounty business. Rascally business, that. I would pick men up wherever I could find them, get them half drunk, and coax them to enlist. They received the bounty, and I had a premium on each of half the amount. I made a great deal of money in this way, which I spent freely. I became a sportsman, went often to the races, and my downward course was greatly quickened.

I got in with a man, who has since died of delirium tremens, and went boating on the river. We would buy stolen goods of the sailors, compel them to enlist on fear of being arrested, and we took the bounty. We went on for some time in this thieving, racing, speculating, and bounty business. We kept a

recruiting office in New York, and another in Brooklyn, and found plenty to do, and might have grown rich if I had saved what I made.

But all this time my conscience was far from easy. I remembered the days at Sing-Sing when the glory of the Lord shone in my cell, and I was shouting with joy for sins forgiven, and improving every moment to win souls to Christ. I knew I was all wrong, and yet I could not stop. I seemed to be on a down track, and rushing at furious speed. When I felt the most troubled I would go to drinking, and try to drown conscience in a glass of whiskey.

CHAPTER IX.

MERCIES OF GOD.

"But the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

AFTER the war was over I went to boating exclusively, buying and selling smuggled and stolen goods. This is a common business among sailors and captains. I gave counterfeit money for the goods, until I became well known for this, and then I had to give it up, for no one would steal for me when they found I gave them nothing for it. From this I became a river-thief, boarding vessels at night and doing the stealing myself. And oh, how many narrow escapes from death have I had while engaged in this wicked business!

One night we were out on the river in our boat, looking for chances. We had been

disappointed in some of our plans at Green Point, and pulled down to the Williamsburgh ferry, where we fastened our craft to the Idaho, one of the regular ferryboats, to be towed across to the New York side. We had steamed out a little way into the river, when the Idaho was discovered to be on fire. It seemed but the work of a moment from the first alarm, till the whole boat was in flames The greatest confusion prevailed among the crew and passengers. We let go as soon as we could, for fear we should be swamped; but before we could push off two men jumped in. We rowed them to the shore and then came back, not to save life, but to get booty. Another ferryboat came alongside and rescued about forty of the passengers, but there were ten or twelve who threw themselves into the water, and these we picked up. We saved one Christian woman. We held on to her as she clenched the sides of the boat with her hands. The whole scene was terrific. The fire raging, the screams of the perishing,

the struggles of the poor creatures in the water, impressed my mind deeply with the thought of the last day and the fiery hell to which I knew the sinner must go. And yet God used us wicked people in the midst of all this terror and confusion, to save his children. My partner wanted me to let the people go, and pick up the cloaks, hats, and various things that were floating in the river; but I said, "No; I have n't got so low as that yet." And I thank God now he helped me do what he did, and get all those poor people safe to the land.

Another night in Brooklyn we stole a rope-fender off a ship, the whole cost of which was not more than a dollar and a half, and yet for that we could run such fearful risks. The captain of the vessel saw us, and seizing his revolver fired at us, once, twice, four times. The balls came so close that I could feel them as they whizzed past my head, but they did not hit. God preserved me that time also; for what?

After I got round the wharf and out of danger, I felt frightened more than before. Something whispered, "If that bullet had hit you where would you have been?" and the response of my conscience was, "In hell."

All the time I was prosecuting this business, in my sober moments I had a longing to be a better man, to lead a sober life; but I felt that after all the joy and peace I had before had, I never could come to God again. Satan always quoted that text to me, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, . . . If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." So to quell these memories and convictions, I kept all the time under the influence of liquor. If any one had spoken to me kindly and Christianly at that time, it would have subdued me, but no one came near the poor, wretched outcast.

CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER NARROW ESCAPE.

"Sinners, turn, why will ye die?
God, my Saviour, asks you, Why?"

One night we went over to Brooklyn on a plundering expedition. I was very drunk. There was a certain vessel at the wharf which we had our eye upon, but I was too intoxicated to do my share of the work, so I stayed in the boat while my partner boarded the ship. By some mishap I fell into the water. The boat went one way, and the eddy carried me in another direction, and out from the wharf. I went down and touched bottom, and rose to the surface. Again I sank and rose. The third time, the thought came to me, "This is the last, and now you are lost—you are drowned." Hell seemed opening under my feet, and I fancied I could hear the wails and shrieks of the lost. Then something said,

"Call on God." But how could I? I felt it was too mean; I had sinned too fearfully. But I did call, and the Lord heard me. I seemed to be lifted right up to the surface of the water, and the boat which had drifted off in another direction was brought right to me, so that I could get hold of it. I can't tell how it was, but it always seemed to me a miracle. The water had sobered me, and after I got hold of the boat I managed to get in. After I was in, something said to me, "God has saved you for the last time. If you ever go out on the river again, God will let you drop into hell and be lost." It was a very clear, strong impression on my mind, but instead of softening me it made me angry.

I took my partner into the boat without a word. We rowed across the river, and I went home and dried my clothes. What a load of guilt was upon me. I could think of nothing else to do, and to rid myself of it I drank, and drank, and drank. But no amount

of liquor could drown that inward voice. In spite of all, I would have gone out again, but my partner met with an accident which prevented his going, so, notwithstanding my desires, I did not. We had no money; I could n't borrow, and I was actually in want.

This may seem strange to some; but while we made a good deal of money in our wicked life, we laid up nothing, but spent as fast as we got it. It was the wages of iniquity, and as the Bible says, "put into a bag with holes," so that it did us no good.

The sting of conscience remained with me, and a strange desire to be out of this wicked business, and in some honorable employment. It seemed wonderful that such feelings should so haunt me all the time; but now I can see that it was the convicting power of the Holy Spirit that was pursuing me, and would not let me go until I had been brought back from my wanderings.

CHAPTER XI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

"Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore;
Heed not the rolling waves, but bend to the oar?
Safe in the life-boat, sailor, cling to self no more;
Leave the poor old stranded wreck, and pull for the shore!"

THE John Allen excitement had just commenced in Water street, and the good Christian people were going through the ward to bring in the sinners to the meetings. I was sitting in my room one of these wretched days, when I heard a stranger in the hall below. The landlady was ill up stairs, and the person who had entered came up. Just outside my door I heard a pleasant voice say to her, "Do you love Jesus?" That voice—those words! It seemed like long-forgotten music. It recalled the past happy days when I had known the love of Jesus, and my heart was deeply touched.

"No, indade, do I love Jesus; and who is he?" was the rough answer I heard.

"My good woman, and don't you know who Jesus is?" and then the person passed on to the top of the house, to see another inmate of the house, whom he had been sent to visit, and the landlady came into my room.

"Who is that?" said I.

"Oh, it's one of them tract pedlars," said she.

"Why don't you treat the man with respect?" said I.

She was silent, but I thought at once that perhaps this man, whoever he might be, might get me a job of honest work; so I went out and waited on the landing till he came down stairs. He saw me; but I was a frightful looking object, and I think he was a little timid at facing me. However, I accosted him, and he told me to come down stairs and he would talk with me. I had a colored shirt on, an old pair of pants, and my hair was cropped pretty close. I think now I must

have been a formidable-looking object. I don't wonder the missionary didn't want to talk with me on the landing, but preferred to have me below on the pavement.

We walked out together, up the street, till we came to the New Bowery. As we approached the Howard Mission he invited me in. I didn't know until then that there was such a place. A gentleman there met us, and spoke to me very kindly. They both said that if I would sign the pledge they would see what they could do for me. The idea struck me as it never had done before, that a drunkard like me couldn't get work, and there was no hope of decent employment unless I did reform. So I signed it. But I told them I shouldn't be likely to keep it, that I had taken it before, and broken it. I wanted to be honest, but I knew I couldn't keep it. "Try it again," they both said, "and ask God to help you." "Well, to please you, I will," I said.

I went right home from there and told my

partner what I had done. How he laughed. "You take the pledge!" he said. He had a bottle of gin in his hand at that moment, and turning out a glass offered it to me. "Tom," said I, "I have just taken the pledge." But I drank it; and as I put down the glass, I added, "Now this is the last drink I shall ever take." "Yes, till you get the next," said he.

Just at that moment in walked the missionary. I kept as far away from him as I could, lest he should detect it in my breath. I think if he had asked me I should have honestly confessed what I had done. But he did not. He only invited me to go out and walk with him. I went; and as we walked I told him I was going out on the river that night, for we were dead broke, I was hungry, and money we must have.

He looked sad and troubled. "Jerry," said he, "before you shall do that, I 'll take this coat off my back and pawn it, and give you the money."

I looked at the coat and saw it was worn and old, and I was touched to the heart. It was as much as I could do to keep the tears out of my eyes. "Here 's this good man," I said to myself, "poor, as I know he must be, willing to take the coat off his back and pawn it to keep me from doing wrong." I do n't know as he saw the effect of his words, but I hung my head.

"I will give you a text out of the Bible," said he. "'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.'"

I remember my answer: "I 'll take that text and trust God."

Then he went away, and in a little while he brought me fifty cents. I got something to eat, and we did not go out boating.

CHAPTER XII.

SAVED.

"Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus,
He 'll carry you through."

THE next day as Tom and I, with Maria, now my beloved wife and helper, and Nellie, the two girls, with whom Tom and I were intimate, were in our room together, the missionary with some Christian ladies came in to see us. They talked with us a while, and then said they would pray. I wished they would n't, but I had not the courage to say so, and they went on. Those prayers had a wonderful effect upon me.

Day after day my new friend followed me up, and so closely that I could get no chance to drink. "Tom," I would say, "I 'm going to turn over a new leaf." But Tom would answer, "Will the Lord come down from heaven to give you a beefsteak?" The mis-

sionary would often repeat the text he had given me, but Tom would n't accept it. I felt, however, that I could. I had had some experience which he had not, and I believed the word of the Lord.

Soon after this we were invited to the missionary's house to take tea. He lent me a coat to wear. After tea they had singing and prayer. I cried and cried.

"Pray for yourself," said he, "and God will save you."

"I do n't know how," I said; "I can't put the words together." It was n't that I had forgotten all about praying; but after I had sinned so fearfully, I felt afraid to utter such solemn words.

"Pray the prayer of the publican," some one cried; 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

I prayed it. My heart was all broken, and I repeated the words over and over.

"Put in 'For Jesus' sake,'" said the missionary.

So I put that in, and oh, the joy that

came into my heart: not like the first time, but more calm and peaceful.

"I am saved," I cried; "Jesus has saved me."

Oh, the joy and excitement of that evening! I shall never forget it. These good people had come down into the Fourth ward to labor among the very lowest of low and wicked men and women, and God had given them a trophy in me, one of the hardest cases in the ward. How their faith was strengthened.

After that the missionary used often to walk round with me, his arm in mine. This was a great help to me, for all my old companions had heard of my conversion, and it was such a strange event that they would shout after me. So it was a protection to be with some one whom they truly respected. It is not so much of an event now for a notorious sinner to be converted in Water street. The wonders of God's grace have been greatly multiplied within the few last year.

CHAPTER XIII.

UPS AND DOWNS.

"The mistakes of my life are many,
The sins of my heart are more;
And I scarce can see for weeping,
Yet I 'll enter the open door."

But before this came about I had a long and trying probation. I found work in the Ferry Company. There I was tempted, and drank again. My good friend, the missionary, had left the city, the meetings were given up, and I felt lonely and sad. I had not then connected myself with any church.

Maria was out of the city, and I felt I must go and see her. I took Sunday for the visit, though conscience told me I was doing wrong. It was a cold, snowy day. I went in the stage, and when we reached the half-way house all the passengers got out and drank. They looked at me as they were taking their hot whiskey, seemingly with

pity, as though I could n't afford to buy. My pride was touched. I went up to the bar and asked for sarsaparilla. The man handed me a gin-bottle and glass. There was an inward conflict, and I grieved the Spirit.

Coming back from my visit, I lost the stage, and had to put in at a hotel. There the devil made me drink again. I could only think of the house "empty, swept and garnished," where the unclean spirit had dwelt. "Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." The unclean spirit had come back into my heart with his unholy companions, and I was in a sad plight.

I went out of the hotel and went straight to a church which was open. I sat down, and though I was drunk, I seemed conscious of what was going on. I was very angry with myself, and cursed God. I said, "I 'll never go back to Water street, to disgrace

God and the good people there." I made up my mind I would kill myself.

I went out from the church and took the cars for home. What a day I had spent. My brain was on fire. My heart was cast down. My conscience was sore. Yes, I thought again, "I will kill myself." I made up my mind to let myself down from the platform and let the cars go over me. But the conductor was there and pushed me in. While I was watching my opportunity the Holy Spirit came to me, and my heart was softened. The next night I went to a meeting, confessed my sin, and asked Christians to pray for me, and I prayed myself that God would forgive me.

I fell again once after that, but God restored me. All this time I kept up the use of tobacco, and that created a thirst in me. And I did n't belong to any church, and so had no Christian influence to hold me. But soon after that I joined a Methodist church on probation, and that strengthened me.

I had another trial. I was required to work on Sunday. I told my employer I was not only reformed, but trying to lead a Christian life.

"Jerry," said he, "you are no better than I. I am a Christian man, but I have to work on Sunday, and you must too. I want you to come to-morrow to work."

But I felt it was wrong, and did not go. On Monday morning I was discharged. I felt badly, for he was a church-member, and I a poor weak beginner in the Christian life.

"Never mind," said my boss, trying to console me; "you go to work and I guess it will be all right."

"No, I wont," said I; "I will trust God."

But I would not leave until I had seen my employer. I found him leaning over the side of the ferryboat. I tapped him on the shoulder.

"Captain C.," said I, "have you discharged me for wishing to keep the Sabbath?"

He made no answer, but I knew he had

heard me. I tapped him on the shoulder again.

"Captain C., have you discharged me for trying to do right?"

"Jerry," said he, "you have n't accommodated me, and I can't accommodate you."

"Good morning," said I, and walked away.

CHAPTER XIV.

WORK FOR THE MASTER.

"If you cannot sing like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus,
You can say, 'He died for all.'"

I WENT on some time without work; then my friend the missionary came back, and introduced me to Mr. H., a rich gentleman in the city. Mr. H. shook hands with me, and told me to keep on doing right, always to keep God's commandments, and when I was in want to come to him. The shake of his hand and his encouraging words built me up. I did n't care for his money, but his kindness put new life into me.

Soon after this I got a job of work, was led into scenes of temptation, and fell again. But this was the last time. I resolved to give up tobacco went into a Christian family who

found employment for me, and I gave myself wholly to God.

And here let me say a word about tobacco. I consider it a great stumbling-block in any Christian's life; but when a man has reformed from drinking, the use of tobacco is positively fatal. It will surely bring him back to his cups. If I had given it up when I gave up rum, I believe I should have had none of those fearful falls which I have described. I was led at last, by the grace of God, to do the clean thing—to give up every sinful habit, and from that time Jesus has kept me.

After a time my work ceased, but the money I had saved lasted me some time. When I got to the last five dollars, I went into my room and prayed most earnestly for work, and before I came out I felt the assurance that my prayer was answered. In a few days a situation was offered me in the Custom House for four dollars a day. But there I preached Jesus too much, and was soon turned away.

Then I got steady employment in another

place, where also I testified for Jesus. I had been there only a little while before a companion began to swear. I reproved him.

"We can get along without swearing," said I.

"What!" said he, "are you a churchman?"

"No, I am a Christian, or trying to be one," I replied.

So I was spotted among the workmen, and pointed out as one of the "hypocrites." One man, a German, I was permitted to lead to Christ.

One day I had a sort of trance or vision. I was singing at my work, and my mind became absorbed, and it seemed as if I was working for the Lord down in the Fourth ward. I had a house, and people were coming in. There was a bath, and as they came in I washed and cleansed them outside, and the Lord cleansed them inside. They came at the first by small numbers, then by hundreds, and afterwards by thousands.

Before I came out of this vision I was in

tears. Then something said to me, "Would you do that for the Lord if he should call you? Would you do it for Jesus' sake?" And I answered, "Yes, Lord, open the way, and I will go." I felt that I could go down there where I had always lived. I was used to the filth and misery, the drunkenness and Romanism, and I felt no reluctance to contend with it. I verily believed I should be called to it.

A little while after that my health gave way, and I took a vacation. I went with my wife to Sea Cliff to attend the camp-meeting. All the time the thought of this work was pressing upon me, and I prayed God to open the way for me to present the subject. He gave me the opportunity. From there I went to Sing-Sing camp-ground, and presented it, and afterwards to Ocean Grove. Many were interested in the proposed work, and gave me in larger or smaller sums, until I held in trust four hundred and fifty dollars.

Then the Lord opened the way for me to

begin the work in a small way at 316 Water street, next door to where the John Allen meetings had been held. The house was in the hands of an aged missionary, but the evening meetings were very small. The City Mission and Tract Society, at the suggestion of one of their friends, put the house at our disposal. We went in October, 1872, laid out the four hundred and fifty dollars in cleaning and repairing the house, and opened the place as a resort for the forlorn wayfarers and sailors who frequented the locality, and put up the sign, "Helping Hand for Men," which has been the guide-board to bring many a poor soul to the foot of the cross.

CHAPTER XV.

WORD OF TESTIMONY.

"Hallelujah! 't is done!
I believe on the Son;
I am saved by the blood
Of the Crucified One."

No one need suppose that I could undertake and go on in such a work without opposition. My relatives, and my wife's also, were Romanists, and were greatly displeased with us. One of my sisters came to talk with me. I tried to convince her of the truth from the Scriptures. I told her there was no other name given under heaven whereby men can be saved but the name of Jesus. I could not convince her, nor she me, so she went to one of the priests about it.

"I am a converted Protestant," said he, "and know both sides, and I will soon fix him."

My sister wanted me to go with her to

see him. I had no desire to go for the sake of argument, but for her sake I said I would, to show her too that I was not afraid. She could n't read, and did n't believe what I had told her of the Bible. "But," said I, "the priest is a learned man, and he will know that I speak the truth." My wife went with us, and a niece who had been brought up in a convent, and was very bigoted and bitter against the Protestants.

"You have come here to be convinced of your errors," said the priest, as we seated ourselves in his room.

"I did," said I, "if you can convince me from the Bible. Excuse me one moment, father; do you believe it to be an inspired book?"

"Certainly."

"Do you believe this of the Protestant Bible?"

"Certainly; there is but little difference."

"I am glad you feel so, to start with," I said.

"You will allow the Catholic church to be the first," he said to me.

"Yes, if you leave the Roman out," I answered. But he took no notice of that.

"Christ said," he went on, "that the gates of hell should not prevail against his church. Now if the gates of hell have prevailed, Christ was a liar."

That sounded hard, and I felt that my Master was insulted, but I kept quiet.

"I want to show you," he said, "that the gates of hell have not prevailed. The first church was made up of the twelve apostles. One of these was a traitor; but the gates did n't prevail then, and have n't since. Have you ever read the history of Rome? Well, they were fearfully wicked in Luther's time. They themselves acknowledged that the church was corrupt and needed reformation. But still the church did not go down. Do you believe Luther was a good man? He could not have been, for no man is good who breaks his vows."

"A bad vow is better broken than kept," I said; but he did not reply to that.

"Do you believe in the Mass?" he asked.

"No; I never read of the Mass or Confession in the Bible. It is a most degrading thing to bow down before a fellow-man to worship him."

"You are not required to do that. We take the sins on us, and stand between you and God."

"Then you stand in the place of Christ. Now God says, 'Go into your closet, and pray in secret, and he will reward openly.' Is n't prayer the same thing with confession?"

He owned that it was, but said, "Does not James say, 'Confess your faults one to another'?"

"Yes," said I, "that is just what we do in our prayer-meetings. When we have been led into sin we say so, and repent and come to Jesus, and testify of his willingness to receive us."

"Well, that 's right."

"And now," said I, "while we are on this point, you have as good a right to confess to me as I have to confess to you. 'Confess to one another,' the Bible says. Then what do you do with these verses: 'There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved,' and, 'There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus'? You presume to be the mediator. You take my sister's sins, for instance, on yourself, you say, and bear them to God."

Then I told him my experience. "I have been a drunkard and a thief, one of the wickedest men that ever lived. I have been in stateprison, and yet this Jesus, who is despised in your church, has picked me up out of the gutter, has washed and cleansed and saved me. But you say all the Protestants will be damned."

"Oh, no," said he, "no; I believe that every good Protestant will go to heaven; but the turn-coats they will surely be lost."

"My sister can tell you what a bad man I was, and what has been done for me. Ac-

cording to your theory this is just to fit me for hell, and it must be the work of Satan."

"Satan often becomes an angel of light."

"Then he certainly has become a friend to me. But no, that is not so; I am not a slave of Satan, I am a free man. Jesus has set me free, as the Bible says he will do for every one that believes in him."

"We do n't follow the Bible."

"What do you follow?"

"The traditions of the church."

"I did n't come here to argue, Father G., but to convince my sister of the truth. I am not afraid of the priest. The Lord has opened my eyes. Your people are afraid of you. You will lie to benefit the church; but God has said, 'All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.'"

I talked fearlessly and faithfully to him. My heart was full of peace and joy, and I believe the Lord that night fulfilled his word, and made the weak and foolish things to confound the wise.

CHAPTER XVI.

A HELPMEET IN THE LORD.

"Working, O Christ, with thee,
Working with thee,
Unworthy, sinful, weak,
Although we be;
Our all to thee we give,
For thee alone would live,
And by thy grace achieve,
Working with thee."

I FEEL that a word about my wife, and the way in which she was led to Christ, will be appropriate here. She too was the fruit of Water street mission-work, and I am sure that my work at the Helping Hand would not be half so successful as it is without her. She is truly a helpmeet from the Lord to me.

She was, like myself, a Romanist, brought up in superstition and bigotry. When she grew up she was obliged, like thousands of others, to earn her own living, and for that purpose came to the city. Here she was ex-

posed to temptation on every side. She went into worldly pleasures, as young people are apt to do, and before long acquired a love for the intoxicating cup. About the time of my conversion she was invited into the John Allen Mission. She attended the meetings, but the gospel invitations she heard did not seem to do her any good. They fell upon her ear, but that was all. They sounded to her, as she often says, like an unknown tongue. And yet they were not altogether new, for they called up to her memory things she had heard in her childhood, when she had been a member of a Protestant Sunday-school. And here, I think, is encouragement for Christian people to bring in such children into their Mission Sunday-schools, even if they do belong to another faith.

The mission-workers labored with Maria very kindly and faithfully, but still she was not converted. She did, however, promise to give up drinking, and after a while was persuaded to leave the city, and to take a

situation in a Christian family in the country. Her friends hoped that in this way, by leaving the places of temptation, and living among good people, she would be brought to choose the right way. Here she was taught in religious things, attended family worship, and read the Bible, but still her heart was not reached.

After several months she left this home for another. This too was a Christian family, and she had the same privileges, and here it was that suddenly the truths of the gospel were revealed to her. They came to her, just as knowledge seems to open to a little child, we do n't know how, only we find, when we are not looking for it, that the child knows. Her blind eyes in an unexpected moment were touched, and she saw; her deaf ears were unstopped, and she heard. The way of salvation opened before her, and the words she had so often heard, and which had slipped off from her, like water from a rock, were all at once full of life and power. They took

hold of conscience and heart; the lessons of her childhood came to her with a meaning they had never had, and she believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and was saved.

When Jesus was revealed to her she received him gladly, and gave herself wholly to him. It was no half-way work with her. Her faith was childlike, her love simple and earnest. She at once received power to lift her out of the bondage of sinful appetite, and her soul was possessed with a love for sinners, and a desire to lead others to the same precious Saviour she had found. She could not rest day or night for the longing she had to tell the glad story of her salvation.

She came back to the city and entered on missionary work, as a Bible-reader in the employ of some Christian ladies in the Fourth ward. She found easy access to tenement-houses, liquor saloons, and dens of infamy, and in every place testified of the grace of Christ, and besought sinners to behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of

the world. Many listened, forsook their evil ways, and came to Jesus, who are living witnesses for the Lord to-day.

I bless God that he permitted us to be united, and to work together in the Helping Hand; and I hope God will let us live a great while to labor for souls. We find it sweet to work for him, and though we know we are in ourselves very weak and helpless, and prone to mistakes, yet we trust in the Lord, and feel that his precious blood is applied every moment to cleanse and save us. Glory be to Jesus!

CHAPTER XVII.

PRESENT SALVATION.

"'Hold the fort, for I am coming,'
Jesus signals still;
Wave the answer back to heaven,
'By thy grace we will.'"

By the kindness of some Christian friends in the city, a dinner was prepared on Thanksgiving day, soon after we took possession of the Mission-house. Bountiful provision was made, and the needy and outcast freely invited. The day closed with a religious service, and the Holy Spirit was poured upon the assembled company. It was a time long to be remembered; and under its solemn influence the Lord put it into our hearts to appoint a similar meeting for the next evening. From that time to the present, now more than three years, the humble chapel of the Helping Hand has been opened and lighted every evening for a gospel service. Hundreds of souls have

been converted to God in this hallowed spot. The Lord has truly honored the place and the work.

The meetings are led by Christians of various denominations in New York and Brooklyn, and it is wonderful how the workers have been blest of God in their earnest effort to do good to others. I am on the spot all the time with my wife, and our work is by no means confined to the evening service. Multitudes of poor, sinful ones come in during the day for help and counsel. We point them to Jesus, the great Physician and Helper of body and soul, and many a one has it been our pleasure to lead to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.

But my vision is not yet fully realized. The house of the Lord, with the bath, the chapel, and all the furnishings which I saw, has not yet been given. It is the dearest hope of my life to see it. I pray daily that the Lord will provide the means to put up just such a building, for it is needed in this

Fourth ward, as a refuge and safe harbor for the poor souls tossed up and down on the billows of sin and misery. And I have faith to believe that in God's own good time it will be accomplished.

Meanwhile we are watching for souls, humbly trusting in the grace of God and the gift of his Holy Spirit, which alone can draw them out of the bondage of Satan into the liberty of children of God.

This short sketch of my life I now lay as an offering on God's altar. I have told enough of my sin to magnify the riches of divine grace which reached out the hand of love and gently drew me in from the depths of iniquity into his loving favor. My prayer is, that the story of what Jesus has done for me may encourage other sinners to trust in him for the same glorious, free salvation.

And now unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

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